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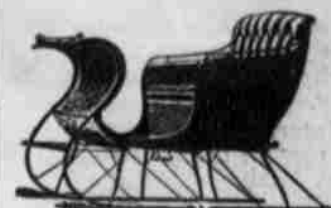
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It's a pleasure to refer you to Sweet's Common Sense Bob Sleds. The genuine—mind you. There are many makes patterned after the Sweet's, but they all lack the Sweet's ability to "climb up" the snow—to slide along the top and not gouge down and into the snow—This wonderful feature of all Sweet's Common Sense Bobs means ease of draft, and bigger loads for you. Prices and terms to your liking.



renewed from time to time. There are various ways of heating the lye tank. Some are large kettles set in brick or over a firebox and are heated after the manner of a feed cooker; others have a coil of steam pipe connected with a boiler outside the building. In places where the fruit is dried with steam it will be found convenient to run a coil in from the boiler to the lye tank. As a matter of fact no two dipping tanks are fitted up in the same way, and the arrangement will be largely a matter of convenience.

Not all prunes are dipped. Silvers are rarely ever dipped, the skins being considered thin enough to admit of rapid evaporation of moisture from the fruit. French prunes are not commonly dipped. Italian prunes with their rhinoceros hides have to be dipped to cut the skin sufficiently to allow water to pass off quickly.

There can be no question but that it would be better if we could get along without dipping prunes, for there is some objection to the use of lye as an article of diet, yet the amount of lye left on a well rinsed prune is so infinitesimal as to be hardly worth consideration. I asked the women who were spreading the newly dipped prunes on the trays whether the lye on the prunes affected their hands. They said, "No, there is no lye left on the prunes."

Pricking vs. Dipping.

Pricking prunes to effect the same purpose as dipping, viz., to cut the skin in such a way as to allow of rapid evaporation of moisture from

the fruit, has not come into general practice in Washington. In California and in some parts of Oregon pricking machines are common. The arrangement consists of an oscillating table studded with needles over which the prunes are passed. The needles puncture and slit the skins making it possible for the moisture to escape rapidly. In some pricking machines the fruit is sprayed with warm water as it passes over the needles, in others the fruit is carried on an endless chain arrangement and passes through a warm water bath thoroughly cleansing it. There is apt to be more drip in the evaporator from the prunes that have been pricked from the fact that the cells of the fruit are more broken and lacerated, but the coagulation of the exudations soon close up the punctures leaving the fruit glazed and of a darker color than dipped fruit. Both methods have their advocates, each claiming the finest fruit is made by their process. The practical men with whom I talked on the matter seemed to be of the opinion that lye dipping is better for our condition, even though it is a little more expensive than the pricking process. It is claimed for the pricking process that no frogs or "bloaters" are possible under the treatment. I know of no pricking machines at present in use in the state. While it is probably true that the amount of lye left on a dipped prune is too small to consider, yet there is considerable antipathy among prune growers to the practice of dipping, and they would gladly welcome some other means to the same end. There has recently been

introduced into California and some parts of Oregon what is known as

The Steam Chamber.

Into this chamber, containing steam at a very low pressure the trays containing the prunes are put for ten or fifteen minutes. It is said that this answers the same purpose as pricking and dipping, and that the fruit so treated will dry heavier, and make just as good a product. It is recommended that the pressure in the steam chamber shall not be greater than $\frac{1}{8}$ pound.

Dipping in Boiling Water.

To effect the same purpose as lye dipping, pricking, steaming, etc., is practiced by at least one man on the west coast. In an article on prune evaporating, read before the Idaho State Horticultural Society by Mr. J. H. Monteith, Eugene, Oregon, he gave the following method as practiced by him:

"The prunes are gathered from under the trees when thoroughly ripe, brought to the evaporator, rinsed in cold water to remove all dirt and dust, then place in wire baskets and dipped in boiling water for two minutes." It is claimed this answers all purposes of lye dipping and will make the skin of even an Italian tender, and leaves no bad effects on the fruit.

From the foregoing diverse practices it will be seen how experimental is this stage of prune drying. All driers feel that it is very necessary to do something to the skin of the Italian prune before putting it in the evaporator, otherwise it would take too long to dry, and when dried it would offer considerable resistance to

the teeth, but as to which is the best way to overcome this toughness of hide is still an open question.

The next process after dipping is to evaporate the fruit, and here is where the greatest diversity of opinion prevails amongst prune growers. To properly present the subject it will be necessary to consider the styles of

Evaporators.

In common use throughout the state. First and most numerous is the old box dryer. This is a hot air dryer, and is simply a box of any desired size set over a pit in which hot air is conducted back and forth in brick flues or in sheet iron pipes. The general arrangement of these box dryers is very similar, so far as I have examined them, though they may differ a little in detail. Two parallel brick walls about five or six feet high, and of the desired length, usually about twenty feet, at one end, between the walls the furnace is built; at the other end is the chimney. It is common to run a brick flue from the furnace to the far end, then return the heat in sheet iron pipes to the front end and back again to the chimney, the object being to get the greatest benefit from the heat before it passes up the chimney. Cold air is let in near the bottom of the brick walls on both sides through holes 8x6 inches at intervals of four or five feet; the air is heated in its passage over the flues, and thence passes on up through the trays containing the fruit. The trays in the various dryers differ a little in size but are com-

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